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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO

DAAG-PAP-A (M) (29 Sep 72) DAFD-OTT

19 October 1972

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Colonel Robert S. McGowan,
Senior Advisor, Quang Ngai Province, Period Nov 71 - Jul 72

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Reference: AR 525-14, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U)
2 July 1971.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of Colonel Robert S. McGowan,
subject as above.
3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from
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Major General, USA
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QUANG NGAI PROVINCE, MR 1
MACV ADVISORY TEAM 17
APO San Francisco 96349

MACFR-QNG

5 July 1972

SUBJECT: Completion of Tour Report (CTR) - (RCS-RECORDS 174-01)

COMUSMACV
ATTN: AS of S COMDS
APO 96222

1. Reference: MACV Joint Directive 4-70, 1 December 1970.
2. Completion of Tour Report required by above directive is herewith submitted.



ROBERT S. MCGOWAN
Colonel, Armor
Province Senior Advisor

DAFD-OTT
728023
Inclosure

SECTION I

NAME: ROBERT S. MCGOWAN
GRADE: Colonel
SSAN: 136-22-2785
BRANCH OF SERVICE: US Army
PROVINCE: Quang Ngai
INCLUSIVE DATES OF TOUR: Nov 71 - Jul 72
EXPECTED REASSIGNMENT DATE: 28 Jul 72
PREVIOUS TOURS IN VIETNAM: Jul 63 - Jun 64; Aug 68 - Aug 69
ASSIGNMENT ON PREVIOUS TOURS:
JUL 63 - NOV 63: Civil Guard Advisor, Vinh Long Province.
NOV 63 - JUN 64: Province Senior Advisor, Vinh Long Province
AUG 68 - NOV 68: EXO 1 Bde 25th US Div, Tay Ninh
NOV 68 - AUG 69: CO 3/4 Cav 25th US Div Cu Chi

SECTION II

1. What background did you have for your position?

Completion of the US Army Command and General Staff College, the Army War College, and the National War College.

Tour of duty as a Province Senior Advisor in 1963-64.

2. What training did you have for this position?

Six week MATA Course in 1963.

3. What additional training would you suggest for your position?

From 1972 on, I question the cost effectiveness of the 42 week PSA program training as a requisite for incoming PSA's when team strengths will be decreasing and the difficulty of being a PSA in like manner decreases. A short period of TDY enroute, perhaps 4 to 8 weeks, should be sufficient to prepare an O-5 or O-6 for his second or third tour in Vietnam in a PSA position. I particularly miss not being language trained, but on the other hand I've seen very few graduates of the VTC who have used their language capability.

4. What should be the length of tour for your position?

One year. In the mid to late 1970's, assuming continuance of an advisory presence in Vietnam, the PSA will have a smaller US staff, will have had previous tours in Vietnam, and will require less time to become effective in fewer advisory areas of interest. I further believe a longer tour does a disservice to the officer serving as a PSA. Regardless of directives to the contrary, it is difficult to equate the position of a PSA who commands perhaps 30 men with that of a brigade commander with the challenges of thousands of soldiers under his command. The PSA program ought to remain highly selective; but the 18 month length of tour and its emoluments such as hand clasp visits, TDY trips with families, ought to be terminated. An O-5 or O-6 with his family at Clark Air Base with 2 of 3 R&R's authorized, should be sufficient attractions to continue availability of the caliber of officer required.

5. Was support from Region and/or Saigon Headquarters satisfactory?
If not, specify deficiencies.

Logistic support from Region was outstanding: Food, mail and aerial transportation capability was more than could be expected. Air America service was particularly noteworthy. Military repair facilities, for generators and the like, was inadequate. Our communications problems with Danang have yet to be fully solved. This support now comes from the G-6 Advisor, FRAC, who advises that his capabilities are limited. We do not have reliable secure communication with Danang, COMUSMACV or FRAC, and our single sideband capability remains marginal.

6. Were there any programs delayed because support was not forth coming? Were there any programs that were especially successful because support was readily available? Which ones?

A "different" kind of refugee has surfaced during the enemy's post - April activities in province, and the where-with-all to accommodate such individuals is unclear. There were many of Quang Ngai's citizens who, having been burned out of their homes, clothing, rice stores and furniture, elect not to move to a refugee site but rather remain at their charred hamlet site to rebuild as best they can. Province officials have requested special funds from Saigon and advisors are helping as they can with authorized funds. It seems to me that these people are more deserving of assistance in that they do not desire to be completely dependent upon GVN for support, but rather desire to stay and rebuild, and to tend their rice fields. We need clarification as to how to assist such individuals.

7. Do the reporting requirements as set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 provide a means for reporting all information of present and future value. If not, what change would you recommend?

I can recommend no change to the present system, except, as in the case of the BIG MACK Report, when a report is Vietnaminized, that the requirement for continued input through US means be discontinued.

8. Do the MACCORDS Management Information System Field Reporting requirements set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 adequately measure progress in pacification programs?

I would rephrase the question to query if the requirements adequately measure the status of pacification programs. Even in 1972, there is too close an association between an advisor's effectiveness and the degree of progress that has been recorded in a particular time frame. I believe the present system is adequate to report the status of pacification, and from that progress can be measured. The HES is a good example of command pressure being exerted to upgrade the status of all hamlets, particularly "V" hamlets. A former I Corps Commander is reportedly to have said, "Any province chief who reports "V" hamlets goes to jail." The result: "V" hamlets rapidly disappeared in this region. US control in those districts still reported by the DSA is a strong lever to produce real GVN efforts to improve the situation that will cause a HES improvement.

9. Were instructions from higher headquarters clear with no conflicting requirements? If not, what specific instances occurred where conflicting instructions were received?

I can make no substantive comment one way or the other.

ANSWER QUESTIONS 10-15 BY GIVING AN ORDER OF PRIORITY.

10. The most clearly defined and directed programs are:

1. Territorial Forces
2. Village Self Development
3. Public Works

11. The most effective paramilitary forces are:

1. AF
2. PF

3. (I do not desire to list the PSDF here, in that their inclusion might impart even a small degree of effectiveness, which would be an error.)

12. The most successful pacification programs are:

1. Territorial Security
2. Village Self Development
3. National Police

13. The programs that have the greatest impact upon the pacification effort are:

1. Territorial Security
2. Village Self Development
3. National Police

14. The least successful pacification programs are:

1. PSDF
2. Province Pacification and Development Council
3. Province Maintenance Program

15. The program that have had the least impact on the pacification effort

1. Youth Affairs
2. Rural Credit Program
3. Land Reform

16. The rural people ~~(are)~~~~(are not)~~ aware of the pacification effort the GVN and US are making. If not, how can they be informed?

The rice farmer is aware of pacification efforts in that he sees friendly and enemy soldiers fight for the control of his land and family. The rice farmer, of course, only wants to be left alone. After so many years of war, words have little impact upon the farmer. Deeds are what count. The people can be made more aware of pacification efforts by providing more permanent security, by opening roads, building schools and hospitals, and the like.

17. The people are ~~(less)~~~~(more)~~ committed to the GVN than when you assumed your job. Why?

In November 1971 Quang Ngai had eleven "V" hamlets and less than 1% of the 730,000 population living under VC control. The May HES readout indicates Quang Ngai has 55 "V" hamlets and 6.2% of the population living under VC control. The Binh Son/Son Tinh coast line to include the Bntangan Peninsula is under VC control with reports of enemy consolidation taking place to include the functioning of primary schools and paramilitary training. OP attacks and hamlet burnings in western Binh Son/Son Tinh have encroached upon GVN control in this area. Resources, both manpower and material, remain committed in other areas of higher priorities outside of province and this is as it should be. Recovery in Quang Ngai, however, will require the return of some of these assets.

18. Do you feel that the pacification plan is sufficiently detailed to provide guidance and set goals that will result in security and development of Vietnam? (Yes) (No) If not, what change in the plan should be made?

The present enemy offensive has set back pacification efforts in Quang Ngai. How quickly and complete the recovery will depend upon GVN priorities, the enemy's intentions, and the steadfastness of GVN officials and the people. I would think that the 72-76 Pacification Plan would be revised at sometime after the present offensive.

19. Do you feel that the pacification plan was adequately explained to you and your counterpart? (Yes) (No) If not, how can this be accomplished?

I can make no substantive comment.

TERRITORIAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE

RF/FF: The effectiveness of the Territorial Forces depends upon its leadership, primarily at the company and platoon level. The aggressive leaders are kept in command positions usually until wounded or killed; the cautious ones stay alive and are promoted up through the system.

Quang Ngai still fights an eight to five type of war with its territorials retiring in the main to static OP's for the night. Each lowland district usually has one RF Company Group -- a battalion equivalent -- but its companies are assigned non-mobility missions that generally leave the district chief with a mobile reaction force of perhaps one RF company and several FF platoons. Experience has indicated a reluctance to commit reaction forces during the hours of darkness. The one province mobile force is its single RF battalion, the 103d. This battalion has performed poorly, has gone through four commanders in eight months, and continues to struggle toward greater effectiveness. The battalion has a long way to go.

The chain of command at the province and the district level has been significantly strengthened in the past three months, as new district chiefs in the lowland districts of Binh Son, Son Tinh, Mo Duc and Duc Pho have reported for duty and in each case a change for the better has been recorded.

Small scale operations, ambushes and raids continue to nip at Quang Ngai's Enemy Main Force, Local Force, and guerrilla units with a measurable degree of effectiveness. Greater effectiveness could be achieved with some realignment of the territorial forces and the acceptance of prudent risks in selected areas. The Province Chief is reluctant to do either.

PSDF: Except in isolated instances, the PSDF of Quang Ngai has not proven to be a viable, dependable security force. Inadequately trained, poorly led, and with little logistic support, those who show promise are either drafted or join the Territorial Forces. In many instances they do not even serve as a warning system for other more heavily armed forces.

A thorough training program, command emphasis, and adequate GVN support are needed before the PSDF concept in Quang Ngai Province even approaches national goals of effectiveness.

PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTORATE

FIELD POLICE: The Field Police of Quang Ngai is primarily urban oriented, with one platoon in each of the six lowland districts and five in and around Quang Ngai City. The City force is excessive and we press for the redeployment of at least three platoons back to the districts. The Field Police are adequately trained and led. They appear to have gained the respect of the civilian sector they serve. They work on combined patrols with National Policemen with no indication of less than complete cooperation.

NATIONAL POLICE OPERATIONS: Quang Ngai recently opened its Police Operational Center (POC) and has assimilated the Phung Hoang operations into its center and under its control. Instructions from Saigon for this change-over are felt to have been adequate, although the status of Army advisors to the program is tentative and they probably ought not be replaced. The national goal of having 80% of all uniformed policemen at the district and village level has not been met; Quang Ngai is at the 75% mark. The POC reports that nine of Quang Ngai's 103 villages are without effective police control due to the current enemy offensive.

WAR VICTIMS DIRECTORATE

WAR VICTIMS: The 1971 RTV program concluded with significant evidence of progress. On 1 July 1971 there were 39 RTV hamlets with 19,000 citizens paid and returned home. At year end there were 62 hamlets and 36,500 people on sites with an additional 62,300 in the process of returning to their homes. The refugee figure during the last six months of 1971 decreased from 25,500 to 11,700.

The 1971 RTV momentum continued into 1972 and at the end of March there were 68 RTV hamlets with 125,800 people living therein.

The present enemy offensive primarily is focused on RTV and resettlement sites. Some 50 population centers have been burned significantly or completely destroyed. As a result, approximately 63,000 refugees were generated.

SOCIAL WELFARE: Social Welfare activities have been primarily directed to the care of the newly created refugees. Most of the 63,000 generated have been assimilated into the nearby countryside, and large refugee centers have not developed. Social Welfare Service in close cooperation with Public Health, Education, RDC, and Social Action Teams of the Phung Hoang Directorate have done a laudatory job in providing for these refugees.

CHIEU HOI DIRECTORATE

CHIEU HOI: Full time advisory coverage of Chieu Hoi activities terminated last fall and very little attention can now be afforded this directorate. The Hoi Chanh rate is very low and national goals are meaningless.

REPORTS AND ANALYSIS DIRECTORATE

Report Requirements: The Monthly Report, the HES, and the Public Safety Police Report remain the major reporting requirements of this team. The Monthly Report is an important one and its present form ought to be continued. US interest in the HES is vital to insure Vietnamese input inflation is curbed. The Public Safety Police Report remains too long and continued efforts need be made to decrease this monthly requirement. The BIG MACK report has been Vietnamezed, yet still a requirement seemingly exists for continued US only reporting. Phung Hoang advisors are now only at Province and BIG MACK input will not be forthcoming from sub-sector Vietnamese officials until they receive orders to do so.

Report Feedback: The results of the HES are meaningful to the provinces--those who supply the input--only to summarize what is known at this level already. The HES obviously has more importance to higher headquarters.

PHUNG HOANG DIRECTORATE

Phung Hoang: The Phung Hoang Program in Quang Ngai has been erratic and without province chief interest or direction. This is regrettable. As a result, the district chiefs are the officials who provide impetus and motivation, if they have either. Where district chiefs are interested in the program results have been satisfactory with the concept of specific targeting understood, practiced, and effective. The transition of Phung Hoang to National Police control appears to have been orderly and complete.

The present tactical situation in Quang Ngai and the decreased size of Team 17 has dictated the use of Phung Hoang advisors in other than Phung Hoang positions. Hopefully conditions will permit a return to normal advisory functions soon.

The BIG MACK Report has been Vietnamized, but a requirement apparently still exists for US only input. With no Phung Hoang Advisors in the districts, and no advisors at all in four districts the dilemma of how to obtain needed data is real, particularly since Vietnamese officials have given no indication of providing the data until ordered to do so by their chain of command.

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Public Health: No advisor has been assigned to this area since the departure of a civil affairs platoon in December 1971. Problems appear to remain unknown by Team 17 or unsolved if known, and positive action is dependent on the limited coverage and assistance available from regional advisors. The presence of a VPVN for two months, April and May, provided extremely professional assistance. With no replacement, however, our awareness of the day to day public health situation is again limited.

Education: New classrooms and additional teacher assets in 1971-72 brought the province closer to the goal of primary education being available for every child. It is estimated that 90% of the primary school age children attended school during the 1971-72 school year. Improvement is needed in the mountain districts and in RTV sites. Public secondary education has not kept pace with the increasing number of primary school graduates. To offset this deficiency several semi-public secondary schools, offering one or two years only of additional schooling, were opened.

Public Works: Quang Ngai is fortunate to have a competent, loyal chief of Public Works. Projects are undertaken as the security situation and resources will permit. QL-1 is patched from the Quang Tin border to Quang Ngai City and wooden bridges are being upgraded into concrete reinforced box culverts or bridges.

The RMK project to pave the Quang Ngai City streets was completed in April, with two streets east of QL-1 not completed due to time limitations. The storm drain system has yet to be seriously tested, but it will be in the fall.

Three major bridges, all in Duc Pho south of the district town, have been destroyed and will require a major engineer effort to reopen QL-1 to the Binh Dinh border. There are no plans at present to repair or replace these bridges.

Economic Development: Economic development continues in this province where rice production and other agricultural undertakings are the main source of income. Prior to the current enemy offensive it was predicted that when the current rice crop is harvested, self-sufficiency in rice production for Quang Ngai would have been achieved, which has not happened since 1964. Now we are not confident with this prediction. Prices have remained steady during the current crisis, new construction of private dwellings and businesses abound, the shops in Quang Ngai City and urban towns are full, markets are busy, and the province rich who fled to Da Nang or Saigon in April have returned to their homes and sources of income. Quang Ngai City's first bank recently opened and another will follow suit soon. Development projects to move GVN influence further to the West have suffered significant but non-permanent setbacks. The road to Son Ha, Route 58, will not be opened this year, and this district and Minh Long and Ba To remain dependant upon aerial assets for resupply and other support.

Land Reform: This program continues at a slow but steady pace with about 500 hectares already distributed, and an additional 45 to 50 applications processed each month. Province interest and energy is elsewhere, and response to this program appears to depend on the degree of village official interest.

Domestic Production: Improved management of fertilizers, insecticides and proven greater yields of the IR varieties of rice have all contributed to increasing acreage being devoted to miracle rice production. Local irrigation projects (the Tu Nghia canal project has most regretfully been shelved for another year when it appeared close to fruition) and the continued private purchase of water pumps have also contributed to more production. Three crops a year are the rule rather than the exception.

The Quang Ngai Sugar Mill ran for a few days during the recent sugar cane season, if only to prove that it would run. Cane was not available locally in the amount needed and there are no means at present to procure it. If other means of providing cane or raw sugar for further processing are not obtained, I suspect Quang Ngai might have a three million dollar white elephant on her hands.

Youth Affairs: More viable at the village than at the district or province level, Youth Affairs has been primarily sponsored by private and religious organizations. VSD funds at villages generally are used to construct a Youth Center. The young people of the province have been visible and helpful in helping to clean up RTV and Refugee sites that have been subjected to enemy destruction. A more dynamic youth program is seriously needed; the youth need to be motivated to participate positively with GVN programs and goals. As evidenced by the high number of youth that are abducted, the enemy is focusing his attention on the young. GVN needs do the same.

Public Administration: The Province Chief has proven to be a better Province Chief than a Sector Commander. He spends most of his time, however, with military matters. His relationship with his Deputy for Administration is tenuous, and recently district chiefs have been critical of the efficient and honest functioning of province administrative matters.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Village Self-Development: The VSD program continues to gain wide acceptance by both the people and village officials, since they have a direct voice in most decisions. During the second Half of 1971 and early 1972, 191 classrooms and 38 health facilities were constructed or repaired, 15 bridges, 20 local roads, 15 markets, 66 dams and irrigation canals, and a hundred other smaller projects were constructed. However, progress has been hampered by continued poor quality, lack of participation, and misuse of funds in some villages, as well as by the lack of ability of some technical services to meet all needs (example: lack of teachers and nurses for new facilities); but even more by inadequate guidance and leadership from the PFDC Secretariat. Hopefully, now that VSD control has been passed to our vigorous RD Cadre Control Group, the situation will improve; some evidence of this has already been shown in their early organization and training. The 1971 program was only temporarily set back by Typhoon Hester; the 1972 program is in suspension until the security situation improves. The strongest point about VSD is that, given \$VN funding, the program is self-sustaining at village level; its weakest point is that the people's contributions of labor and money have been decreasing, not increasing.

RD Cadre: Under a strong, vigorous and effective Control Chief, the RD Cadre have made a large contribution to development. The reorganization of RD Cadre groups and the 1/3 reduction in strength to 1350 cadre during the past six months have required some re-ordering of priorities. Because of the current offensive, attention has been diverted from development to refugee problems and to security and defense. The future will depend upon the caliber of the replacement for our soon-to-be-transferred Control Chief.

Ethnic Minorities: Under a new and vigorous Chief, activities of the EM Service have greatly increased. Aid and assistance of all kinds have been expanded, the Montagnard land reform program has been strongly pushed, and efforts have been made to revive the old cinnamon trade in Tra Bong. At the moment, due to the current enemy offensive, primary attention is being directed to refugee relief.

Local Government: 17 villages successfully held village and hamlet elections in January and March; however, subsequent planned elections have been cancelled due to martial law. The successful VSD program in no small way contributed to the reelection of most village chiefs and council chairmen in these villages. In most villages the elections were vigorously contested, with the various VNQDD factions maintaining their edge. Despite this evidence of strong local democracy, sentiment is strong at higher levels of the GVN for appointment of village chiefs in insecure villages. Training of local officials has been spotty, with attendance levels ranging from fair to poor.

Aid in Kind: Utilization of the available funds has increased from 50% to 100% of maximum authorization. Principal areas of assistance have been in printing and binding, building construction and maintenance, and relief supplies, in support of the war victims, health and sanitation, payops, education, public works, and Thung Hoang programs.

JOINT UNITED STATES PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PSYOP: VIS efforts vary from poor at the village/hamlet level to very good at province. The VIS chief is a deer and motivates those who work for him. The caliber of the lower level cadre is the main obstacle to better performance at the rice root level.

Coordination among the People's Information Committee, VIS, Chieu Hoi and the Sector S-5 (POLWAR) is excellent with the pooling of resources and personnel for specific psywar operations.

Advisory efforts in this field have been significant in recent improvement in operations and cooperation among the various agencies.

OTHER AREAS

Quang Ngai Leadership: Attention is directed elsewhere in this report to the need for improvement in the lower levels of command throughout the province. This paragraph perhaps focusses attention in the primary area of concern. Colonel Ngo Van Loi, Province Chief and Sector Commander of Quang Ngai for almost two years, is a dedicated, honest, loyal Colonel of the South Vietnamese Army who is tired. Never dynamic or aggressive, yet on the other hand neither incompetent nor corrupt, Colonel Loi has made open inquiries concerning his reassignment and I would support such a move, providing such would be accomplished completely without prejudice. There is no question of the positive impact upon Quang Ngai Province that a dynamic, aggressive, proven tactical commander would have. The fact that Quang Ngai's Deputy for Security, who commands the provincial territorial forces on a day to day basis, has recently been reassigned to I Corps in Hue is an added factor why Colonel Loi's reassignment should be acted upon in the near future. Colonel Loi has given his total energy and attention to his demanding assignment. He works long hours, seven days a week. The fact that his difficult province has not deteriorated to a greater degree in the present emergency is in large measure due to Colonel Loi's efforts. It appears now is a prudent time for a normal change of province chiefs.

Division/Sector Relationship: The relationship between the 2d ARVN Division and Quang Ngai Sector has been less than satisfactory. With the division oriented on the big war and in a controlling position concerning out-of-province assets, it appears that what might have a significant impact on sector operations is added to division assets for their use. This general thought applies to assets for aerial observation, airstrikes, artillery coverage, medevacs, armor support, maneuver battalions, and more. It is only recently that aerial surveillance and preplanned air strikes have been made available to sector in a limited fashion while higher priorities exist elsewhere and primary attention and resources need be concentrated where the greatest threat lies, the requirement of sector to contain enemy efforts and preempt his attacks cannot be ignored, and this I believe was the case with the 2d ARVN Division. Regrettably we were not able to make much headway with divisional advisors. A new division senior advisor is due in early in July and we anticipate a marked change in Sector/Division advisor effectiveness.

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